Confidential

The Attorney General
The Department of Justice
Washington, DC 20530

6/16/93

Dear Ms. Reno,

Hoping to make possible avoiding considerable official embarrassment if Governor Connally is buried without retrieval and close examination of the JFK assassination bullet fragments that remain in his body I wrote you in haste early this morning so the letter could make today's mail. Later I remembered that recently I heard of another matter that, if true, can also result in your being embarrassed publicly.

After the appearance of my book on the King assassination, Frame-Up, I became James Earl Ray's investigator. I then got to know him and his family well. I still hear from Jerry Ray. He is far from an entirely trustworthy source but he can tell the truth. He told me that Mark Lane had been in touch with you or expected to see you.

Although it would appear that Lane has the best credentials, in fact there are few who can be as entirely undependable. Or in general less trustworthy if he can have an ulterior purpose, which is not uncommon in his record. He has never done any real work on the facts of the assassination, even when Ray's counsel. He is skilled at propaganda, especially if he can get personal attention from it. He also has a record on the assassination you can confirm from FBI and possibly departmental records.

He and Dick Gregory got considerable attention and caused the Ford administration no little embarrassment over the transparently fictional account of a young man facing jail on drug charges, Byron Watson. Lane and Gregory trumpeted Watson's fabrications before every available camera, microphone or reporter's notebook. As a result the White House requested an investigation. I obtained some of those records in my CA 75-1996. Although what Watson alleged was soon proven to be false, as I'd learned when years earlier I had been asked to evaluate it, thanks to Lane, Gregory and others that assassination mythology lingered for a long time, causing the waste of considerable time and money, particularly for Atlanta authorities, together with some embarrassment. He and Gregory saw the possibility of embarrassing the government while getting much personal attention and to Lane nothing else made any difference.

As Ray's investigator I made the investigation based on which was his effort to get an evidentiary hearing to determine whether or not he would get a trial. I then conducted the investigation for those two weeks of hearings in Memphis. I produced and prepared witnesses who had not been interviewed by the FBI and whose testimony easily survived cross-examination.

With Ray's senior counsel abroad it fell to Jim Lesar, junior counsel, and to me to exercise the two days permitted for discovery and to prepare for the hearing. Lesar handled the law and I the evidence.

Ray's former counsel was the late Percy Foreman, then the most famous criminal lawyer in the country. It fell to me to prove ineffective assistance of counsel. I decided that the only way to do that was by in effect trying the case alleged against Ray. In doing that I in effect exculpated Ray.

In the face of all the relevant evidence the court ultimately held, and these are close to the precise words, that guilt or innocence was immaterial to what was before it, whether Ray had knowingly and voluntarily entered the plea that clearly had been coerced and whether he had had the effective assistance of counsel.

For your information, Foreman spent in all about 10 hours with Ray. He made no investigation, hired no investigators to do that and he wound up bribing Ray, in addition to coercing him into agreeing to the plea. Which Ray then challenged at the voir dire when Foreman extended what he had compelled Ray to agree to.

Foreman's actual claim was that he did not trust professional investigators and instead used law students. He could not remember the name of a single one or any evidence any one produced.

And thus in a crime of that magnitude the system of justice was not permitted to work. My hope to be able to make it work led to my being Ray's investigator.

It is my non-lawyer's understanding that the only avenue now available to Ray is an effort based on new evidence. I understand this to mean evidence not known to the defendant and not used previously on his behalf. I believe that I now have such evidence. I have not used it in any writing and I have not given it to any of Ray's subsequent counsel because I did not trust some and believed I could not trust others. If you, personally, want it I will give to any of your staff what I can easily lay my hands on and describe the rest for ready retrieval of most. I offer this with the assurance that I would not in any way exploit it. If you would like this, I would prefer that any interview be tape recorded and kept confidential unless or until you might decide otherwise.

I am now 80 years old. My health is seriously impaired. I am frail and limited in what I am able to do. It is no joy to me to believe that when I die nobody will know some of what I knew about the Kennedy and King assassinations - and their investigations.

If what I say interests you and you wonder about me, the dependability of my word and my steadfast refusal to commercialize what I have done, your own lawyers, if any remain in the Civil Division who were on my FOIA cases, will not, I am confident, be able to tell you that I ever misstated fact. They should also remember that for my own reasons, which include the desire to make an unquestionable record for our history, whenever possible I avoided statements by counsel and instead stated what I wanted to state under oath, making myself subject to the penalties of perjury voluntarily. And as you can easily learn, rather than sell what I have accumulated my leaving it, with no quid pro quo, to local Hood College, is recorded in the local court house.

You also have my assurance that if you decline my offer or do not answer me at all I will make no use of either.

Should you have any interest in the assassination of President Kennedy, and on that there soon will be a veritable flood of trash, I will answer any questions I can and, should you want it, will with the publisher's agreement give you a copy of the unedited manuscript of my new book together with its documentation.

Nor am I trying to blindside you. I think you should know that there is every likelihood that the FBI will not welcome what I suggest. Those of its records that I obtained via FOIPA, far from all despite its assurances, range from deliberately twisted to be prejudicial to outright fabrications. An example of the latter is its telling the LBJ White House in November, 1966, that my wife and I annually celebrated the Russian revolution with a gathering for 35 strangers at our home. That is how it represented an annual religious gathering at our farm after the Jewish high holidays- which do not coincide with that revolution.

It has my earlier FOIA requests filed as subversive, in its 100 file classification. It also, and baselessly, has me filed under espionage, in the red sense. And not in any sense true. However, I was an unregistered British agent before I entered the Army in World War II and that was at the suggestion of the department, which could not use the results of some of my Nazi cartel investigations that I took it prior to the publication of the stories I wrote.

Because I know the nature of its ingrained attitudes and prejudices I also assure you that, as the FBI must know, I have never been a Communist and, on occasion, I have defended the FBI against baseless charges made by those who theorize conspiracies and exploit that.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

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I am sorry my typing cannot be any better. If you want to check on me I suggest three college professors who are subject-matter experts; historians Dr. David Wrone, Univ. Wisconsin, Stevens Point (home phone 715/314-8148) and Dr. Gerald McKnight, local Hood College, (home phone 301-473-5639) and sociology/criminology, Dr. Gerald Ginocchio, Wofford College, Spartanburg, SC 29302, home 594 Lucerne Drive.